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COUNTRY Germany/Russian Zone

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SUBJECT SMA-SED Consultations on a German
Central Government

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SUPPLEMENT

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1. A conference was held in late January in Leipzig to discuss the question of a German constitution and a German government. It was attended by leading SMA political officers, SED leaders, and KPD officials from western Germany.
2. In regard to a German constitution, the KPD officials pointed out that it is foolish to use the SED draft as the sole basis of discussion. They argued that the public conception of this draft as the "Eastern Proposal" would automatically defeat their whole purpose.
3. The Russians announced that, in view of the advanced stage of the merger between the U.S. and British zones, the time may come when the Russians will deem it advisable to establish a zonal government in their zone as a counterweight to further unification of the western zones. The SED representatives, especially Grotewohl, pointed out that the SED is stressing German unity in its propaganda and that the formation of a zonal government in the east would cut the ground from under their feet. The Russians admitted the cogency of this argument and stated that they would form a zonal government only as a last resort.
4. The Russians announced that they are supporting all efforts to create a central German government which would really represent the interests of the "democratic workers". Mention was made of the difficulty of finding political leaders who would actively support the Russian solution of the German question. The Russians agreed that the SPD must be included in a central government. The hardest problem, they said, is to find able Social Democrats who, at the same time, do not occupy a strong position in the SPD. In this connection, mention was made of Karl J. Gerner, Jr., ex-member of the SPD Executive Committee, who has come out for rapprochement between the east and west as the decisive element of present German policy. Gerner is reportedly in close touch with the SMA Political Division.

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The Russians also want to include western politicians, especially those from the border areas, in the central government; Kossmann, of Saarbrücken, was mentioned.

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Comment: Russian interest in Germany and Kossmann was discussed in a report, information date early February 1947. "Wer ist's?" lists Bartholomäus Kossmann with various political positions in the Saar; he was formerly chairman of the Catholic Miners' Union and member of the Executive Committee of the Federation of Catholic Trade Unions.

5. The same source reports that the SED and LDP have continued discussions about a German government. The SED hinted that they would accept LDP chairman, Dr. Kuhl, as German Chancellor or Prime Minister. The Russians had explained to the SED that under the present political conditions, especially in the west, it would be a grave tactical mistake to try to give this post to an SED leader. On the other hand, the Russians would refuse to entrust the highest post to a Social Democrat and would be very reluctant to approve a CDU leader who would be under the influence of various "reactionary" movements in west and south Germany. Dr. Kuhl has always "cooperated" with the Russians and they consider him excellent camouflage. The Russians and the SED are also considering Dr. Andreas Hermes for a post in the future German cabinet, as one CDU leader who is not under the influence of Adenauer. Hermes has been cordially received in Berlin by the Russians, who are aware of his great political ambition and his large following in southwestern Germany.

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